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RULSDMK/DOT WASHDC  
RHMCSSU/FAA WASHDC  
RUEAYOK/FAA AERONAUTICAL CENTER OKLAHOMA CITY OK  
RUEAHLC/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC

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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/E, AF/RSA, S/CT AND EB/TRA/AN  
DEPT PASS USAID  
DEPT ALSO PASS TO DOT FOR CONNIE HUNTER

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAIR PTER PGOV KE SO

SUBJECT: KENYA SUSPENDS SOMALIA FLIGHTS

REF: Nairobi 4220

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Citing security concerns, the Government of Kenya (GOK) suspended all scheduled flights between Somalia and Kenya effective November 13. In so doing, the GOK will require all charter flights to apply for clearance, providing a detailed manifest of passengers, crew, travel documents and reason for travel seven days in advance. The order affects two airlines' service between Nairobi and four Somali cities, and cargo flights carrying the narcotic khat (miraa) to Somalia. Press reports claim the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Baidoa, Somalia supported the move. The opposition Islamic Courts called it unwarranted and based on anti-Islamic sentiments. The suspension follows the October 4 restriction of flights carrying Somali passengers to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, and is another sign of the GOK's growing concern with events in Somalia. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On November 11, the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) announced in a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) that "All scheduled flights to/from Somalia or into Kenya are suspended," and that "All charter flights between Kenya and Somalia will be required to obtain a clearance seven days before the expected date of the flight." Applications for clearance must include a detailed manifest of passengers, crew, travel documents and reason for travel. Kenya's Chief Immigration Officer Ndathi advised his staff the suspension was effective from Monday, November 13, and would remain in force "until further notice." On November 13, a UN flight and a commercial flight from Mogadishu were detained, checked and permitted to fly.

¶3. (U) The order affects Dallo and East Africa Express Airlines, which were offering scheduled service six days/week from Nairobi to Mogadishu and three other Somali cities. The order also affects the 10-12 daily flights carrying khat (AKA miraa, a mild narcotic) from Wilson Airport to Somalia and back. The order strengthens the October 4 requirement issued by the Kenya Civil Aviation Administration (KCAA) that any flight carrying passengers or excess crew had to land first at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), and not the less secure Wilson Airport, for processing. (Note: The GOK previously suspended Somalia flights in 1999 and 2001, but the bans were dropped because of opposition from politically-powerful khat producers in the Mt. Kenya area. End Note)

**¶4.** (U) AFP quoted Kenyan government spokesman Alfred Mutua as stating, "We have indefinitely suspended flights between Kenya and Somalia for security reasons." AFP also cited Somali Islamist spokesman Sheikh Abdurahim Ali Muddey as calling the suspension unwarranted because Somalia posed no threat; he accused Kenya of anti-Islam sentiment in imposing the suspension. TFG Information Minister Ali Jama is quoted as saying that the ban was prudent following the U.S. warning of possible terror attacks in Kenya.

**¶5.** (SBU) USAID reports the flight suspension has already prevented urgent supplies from reaching flood victims in Belet Weyne. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Eric LaRoche, has written directly to the Kenyan Minister of Foreign Affairs, requesting that humanitarian charter flights be allowed to fly on 24 hours notice, and European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and ICRC are pursuing similar requests. If the GOK demurs, UNSG Annan may raise the issue with President Kibaki at his November 15 meeting. Late on November 14, World Food Program (WFP) Somalia told Emboff the Kenyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Kenyan Ambassador to Somalia have assured them the flight ban for humanitarian flights will be lifted as of Thursday November 16. According to WFP, the Kenyans claim the ban was never intended to affect humanitarian flights.

RANNEBERGER